

# The Ballarat Naturalist

Volume 23 No.03

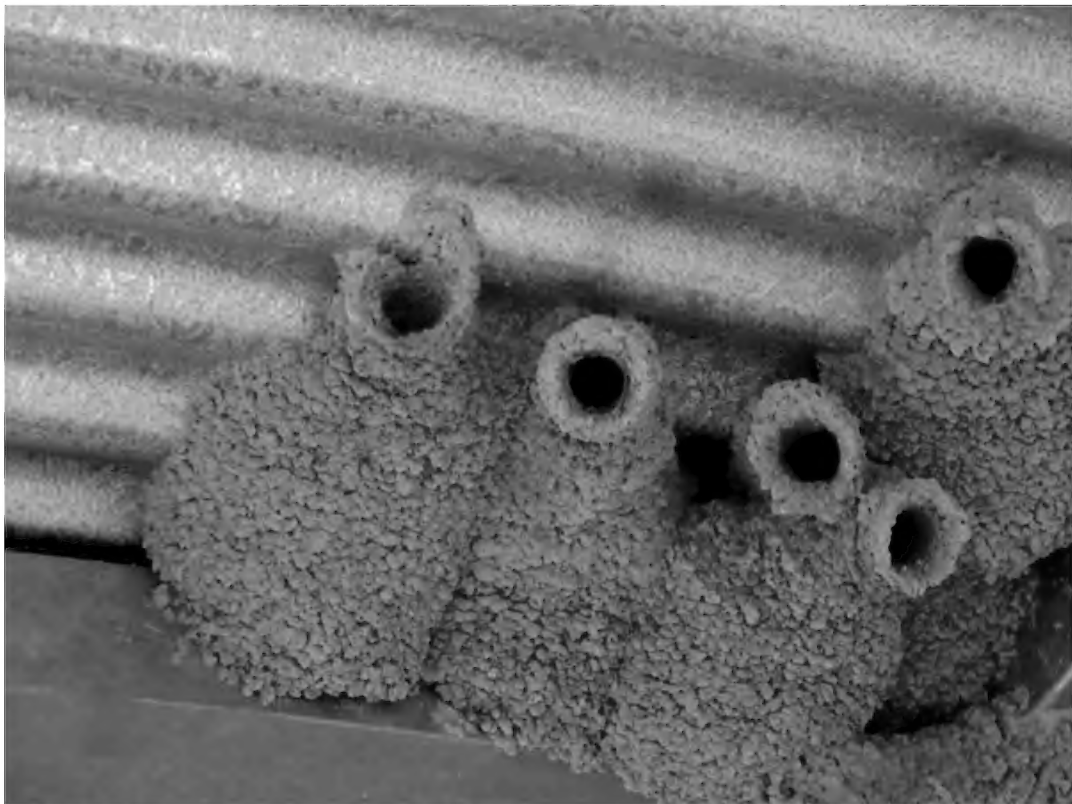
April 2023



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## March 23 Meeting Members' Images of Natural Engineering

Claire and Peter showed structures created or amended by creatures. Many were birds showing their variety of techniques used to build nests, sometimes taking advantage of existing structures such as an osprey nest built high on a communication tower near Exmouth, welcome swallows building their mud and grass nest under a roof at Port Campbell, a fairy martin colony of bottle shaped nests beneath a picnic shelter at Coongie Lakes N.P. ( pictured) and



a wedge tailed eagle nest on top of an old pine tree near Dowling Forest. Other birds created elaborate structures using naturally available material and great skill such as the Mallee fowl in WA wheat belt and a Great Bower bird with its carefully built stick bower, decorated with white objects in Purnululu N.P.

Dawsons burrowing bees (*Amegilla dawsoni*) were fascinating to watch in Kennedy Range N.P. in the Gascoyne area of W.A. These gregarious bees gather on hard, dry clay pans to build individual burrows with protective turrets in which eggs are laid and develop unattended. Termites also build tall elaborate structures in which they live and raise successive generations. Some use sun direction to

facilitate temperature adjustment.

A spider web picture acknowledged their engineering skill and another showed an adult spider minding baby spiders in a flat mass of protective web. A thorny devil from hot, dry country was shown. Any dew or rare moisture collects on their skin for transfer to their mouths. A stinkhorn fungus, shown to us by Bruce Fuhrer in the high country looked colourful and attractive but smelled terrible, thus attracting many flies which consume the smelly liquid thus spreading spores. A pitcher plant in Montreal showed its way of attracting insects to boost nutrients.

From Hamelin Pool, in Shark Bay, W.A. were stromatolites, extremely early and important in the evolutionary story, creating oxygen. Nearby is Shell beach, long and deep, made entirely of small shells from tiny marine creatures which thrive in this hyper saline ocean. People have used these beds of compacted shells to make buildings. A natural stone arch near Sandstone in W.A. shows how nature, over eons can create apparently engineered structures, strong enough to support vehicles in earlier times.

Claire Dalman

Carol chose to show cobwebs spangled with dew or raindrops, usually those created by orb-weaver spiders. Some of the spokes of their webs meet in the centre of the web, others stop short, leaving a circular gap. Of particular interest to her was the web of the Christmas Jewel Spider *Austracantha minax* seen recently in the Bert Boardman Reserve in the Brisbane Ranges. This colourful spider, only 1-1.5cm long, has 6 short spines and yellow and orange patterns on its back. The webs were often created across footpaths, resulting in our having to duck beneath them or walk around! Partially completed webs lend themselves to artistic interpretation in photography.

Carol Hall

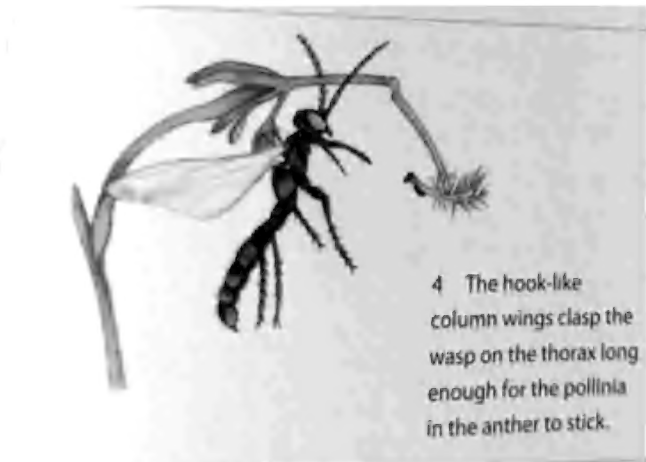


Val spoke about engineering mechanisms that some orchids use for both fertilisation and nourishment. The most intriguing one was the Elbow Orchid seen in February at Enfield, that uses both its shape and scent to attract the male wasp pollinator. Emily later added that the scent chemical composition emitted by the plant is identical to the scent the female wasp gives off. Val used drawings from Enid Mayfield's book *Flora of the Otway plain and ranges 1* to illustrate the ingenious fertilising method

Val Hocking



3 The wasp grasps the labellum as he would a real female and attempts to fly away and mate with it, but instead it swings him back against the anther.



4 The hook-like column wings clasp the wasp on the thorax long enough for the pollinia in the anther to stick.



This photo captures the beauty of a three-dimensional marvel of natural engineering in a local backyard. Unfortunately the creator was not observed. The web demonstrates the ingenuity of spiders to create structures that appear chaotic to the untrained eye, however, are intentionally designed: with anchors to secure the web, and a maze of high-tension catching threads to trap their unsuspecting prey. You may also notice in the photo that the spider has used leaves, woven together to create a small retreat.

Sheree Cartledge



Members' Images – Natural Engineering By Emily Noble

When I think of engineers, I typically picture professional people studying complex plans of buildings/ roads/ tunnels/ bridges covered with mathematical calculations and scientific formulae. It is an image backed up by dictionary definitions, with the Latin root of *engineer*: *ingeniator* combining *ingenium* meaning “cleverness, genius” and *ingeniare*: “contrive, create or devise”.

Another closely related word refers to “innately”, “naturally”, “with ingenuity”. Perhaps it is this word: “ingeniatus”, that best captures the characteristics of the natural engineers I’d like to shine a light on.

Like the ground-breaking engineers working on the construction of tunnels for new rail lines in the London underground who bore a

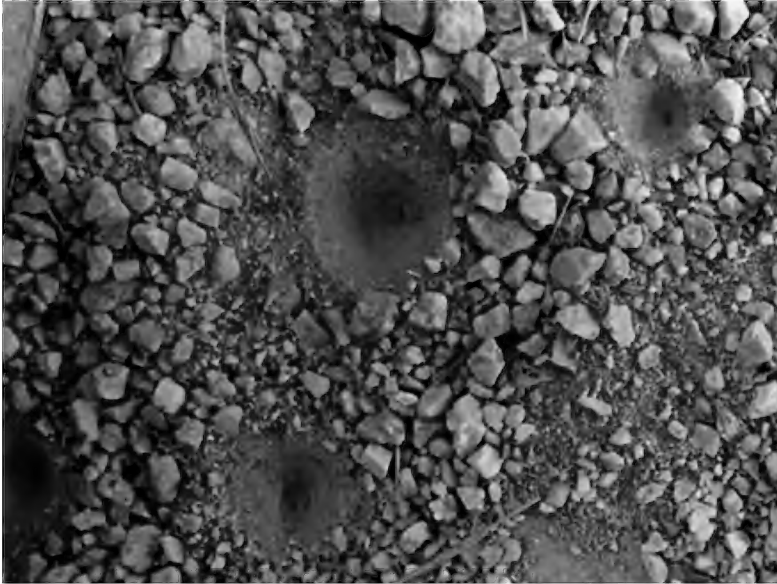
hole then line it with concrete to strengthen its structure and avoid collapse, the inch-long spider wasp, possibly from the genus *Fabriogenia*, digs a tunnel as a nursery for its young in relatively soft, sandy ground. It uses a digging technique reminiscent of a dog digging in the sand at the beach, then meticulously lines it with mandible-load after mandible load of perfectly laid and smoothed clay sourced from a nearby dam to ensure the strength and integrity of the tunnel. Only then will it find, capture, paralyse and de-limb a spider, carry it to the far end of the tunnel, lay an egg on it and build a wall to seal it up as a bedroom. It will fit as many rooms as it can along the length of the tunnel. Eventually its larvae, nourished by the spider left harmless in its bedroom, will mature to adulthood and chew and dig its way out.

When building a mud-nest, this mud-dauber wasp likes to have a grand entrance. I can only shudder at the complicated mathematical formulae that would be required for a human to construct a similar thing. Over the course of several hours, it slowly, delicately forms this smooth, funnel-like entrance. I thought perhaps it was to impress the neighbours, but I don't think this Cuckoo Wasp was who it was hoping to attract.



The larvae of antlions essentially build pit-traps to catch their prey. They construct a remarkable funnel, excavating in a backwards spiral until the loose, dry sand reaches the critical angle of repose, providing a scree slope down which its “lunch” tumble towards it, waiting just under a fine layer of sand. I recommend the great description of the pit construction process in Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antlion#Life-cycle>). Given the intimidating appearance of their pincers, I was surprised to observe that antlions

don't grab their prey (ants and other small insects) at the first opportunity, but let them wear themselves out completely first, trying to scabble back up the slippery slope. If they look like they might make it, the antlion flicks up a cloud of sand at the ant, seemingly blinding and disorienting the insect and inevitably causing it to slide back down the funnel.



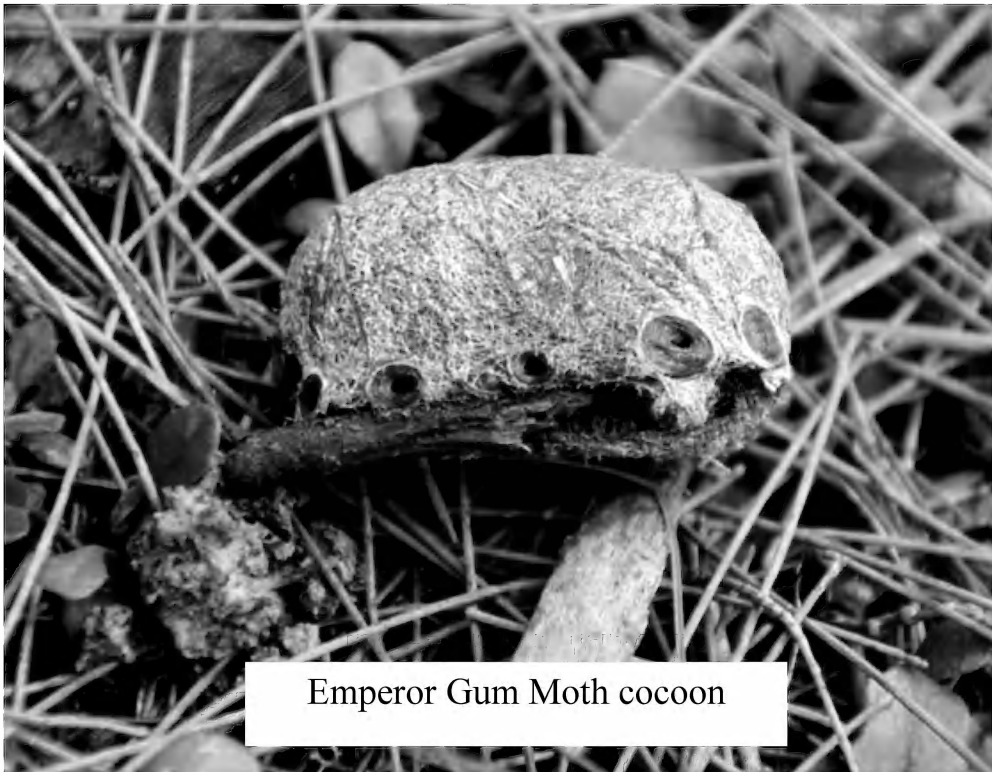
The funnel-shaped pit-traps constructed by antlion larvae

Case moths are also wonderful natural engineers, manufacturing incredibly strong fibres for the protective cases they carry around (wear) with them, like a weatherproof sleeping bag. Emperor Gum Moth caterpillars, like many other caterpillars, also engineer extraordinarily strong materials for their cocoons, further reinforced with their own hairs, providing sturdy protection for them whilst they pupate into moths.



Case Moth in its highly-engineered "sleeping bag"





Emperor Gum Moth cocoon

### Grasstree engineering

Grass trees were recognized very early in the occupation of Australia as unique and interesting in their botany, structure, and physical and chemical character. Robert Brown the English botanist who accompanied Matthew Flinders in the HMS Investigator in his circumnavigation of our continent said this in 1814...

“Xanthorrhoea” is in habit one of the most remarkable genera of Terra Australis and gives a peculiar character to the vegetation of that part of the country where it abounds”

Grass trees have a crown of long narrow leaves and a leaf base covered trunk. Grass trees are highly flammable and yet can resist intense heat. Even though the dead leaves when they catch fire may reach temperatures exceeding 1000 degrees C during fire, the temperature above the stem apex remains at less than 60 degrees and the roots are insulated completely. Following fire, leaf production from the intact apical meristem of the plant is up to six times greater than when unburnt.

Physical engineering aspects of our chosen Grasstree - *Xanthorrhoea australis* (see photo) include:

The stem which is in part arborescent and subterranean, well developed up to three metres long, woody and covered with persistent leaf bases.

The leaves clustered in a terminal crown are quadrate rhombic to transverse rhombic in shape, ranging in size from 30 to 140

centimetres in length, tapering distally from 1.2 to 3 millimetres wide. This gives them great strength and maximises surface area for photosynthesis (leaf area index). The leaves being suitably shaped have some xeric qualities, reducing water loss from the plant when conditions are dry.

The base of the stem is firmly anchored in the ground with multiple short strong roots placed evenly around the stem, 360 degrees and supported by a latticed and reinforced stem wall, extending underground.

Chemical engineering aspects:

At the base of the leaves a brown exudate is produced which is a resin and can be used in the manufacture of tools. The stem of the plant was also used by indigenous people to make the lower part of a spear. The NSW botanist, J H Maiden believed that the plant could be used in candle making for the resin burns by itself with a very bright flame

Andy Arnold -





**Melton Botanic Garden was the place visited on our March excursion.** Eight members braved the forecast hot weather and spent a few hours wandering around the many paths. An active friends group develop and maintain the garden and many were out picking up rubbish as our visit coincided with Clean Up Australia Day.

We began our walk near Main Lake after a brief look at the bush-foods garden. Pacific Black Ducks, Australian Wood Ducks and Crested Pigeons were around the lake edge along with a white duck. Perhaps it is the same one seen several years earlier. It turned out it wasn't a good bird spotting day as it was windy with most of us focussed on trying not to lose hats into the water. There were no cormorants using the dead trees which would usually be expected. Purple Loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*, provide patches of colour on the lake edges as we made our way past the Eastern Australian Dryland Garden and onto the indigenous plantings and relatively new wetland. There are still some areas being developed with a huge mound of soil sitting where there will be a Californian, Central and South American and succulents section. The grassland species created interest, even though the plants are not at their best at this time of year.

We saw where another carpark will be provided as we headed back to view the magnificent River Red Gums around Small Lake and along Ryans Creek. There are extensive indigenous plantings along the creek and edges of the lakes and the signs showing the birds and insects that may be seen are a wonderful addition. A leisurely lunch was taken in one of the shady shelters back near Main Lake after we had finished one of the several possible loops.

After lunch we walked on the north side of Small Lake and beside the creek partly through the dried leaves and bark to enjoy the scent of the Lemon-scented Gums, *Eucalyptus citriodora*. We stopped to read the information about Latham's Snipe, a migratory wader, which can sometimes be seen along the creek from September to February, then headed to the mixed gardens near the nursery. We found a different sort of Anchor Plant to what we are used to, *Colletia paradoxa* from South America, a prickly, leafless shrub with flattened blue-green stems. The stems are arranged in opposite pairs like boat anchors.

We made our way back past the native grassland areas, and through the Dryland Eucalyptus Arboretum, Western and South Australian sections to the Southern African garden that surrounds the prominent red painted dead tree. There is plenty to see and several

visits throughout the year are recommended. The paths are flat, many are suitable for wheelchairs and there is a lot of seats to sit and take in the views.

The last club excursion to the gardens was in September 2017 and much has changed with many more plantings and more areas opened for exploration. Here is a link to the Friends Group where you will find out more on the history, how the garden is funded, events, plant lists and other information. The friends are celebrating their 20-year anniversary this year. <https://www.fmbg.org.au/index.htm>

**Bird List**

- Australian Magpie
- Australian Wood Duck
- Common Myna
- Crested Pigeon
- Eurasian Blackbird
- House Sparrow
- Magpie-lark
- Musk Lorikeet
- New Holland Honeyeater
- Noisy Miner
- Pacific Black Duck
- Purple Swamphen
- Rainbow Lorikeet
- Red Wattlebird
- Red Wattlebird
- Red-rumped Parrot
- Scaly-breasted Lorikeet
- Welcome Swallow
- White-plumed Honeyeater
- Willie-wagtail



Report by

Elsbeth Swan

Anchor plant

*Colletia Paradoxa*

**Excerpts from the Minutes of the 70th FNCB Annual General Meeting Friday 3rd March, 2023 •**

**Opening and Welcome** FNCB President Margaret Rich warmly welcomed 28 members (including five via Zoom) & two visitors and acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land we were meeting on. •

**Apologies** were received from: Mark Moravec and John Mildren. . •

**Minutes of Previous (69th) AGM:** were circulated prior to meeting and taken as read by Secretary, Emily Noble. Accepted •

**President's Report:** Margaret Rich presented her Annual President's Report illustrating the many activities enjoyed by Club members over the previous year.

**Treasurer's Annual Report:** Kathy Elder presented her Report via Zoom from sunny Ulverstone in Tasmania.

Opening Balance (20/02/22):     \$8,359.90

Income:                                 \$3,346.47

Expenses:                               \$3,011.84

Closing Balance (19/02/23):     \$8,694.53

**Election of Office Bearers and general committee members** was overseen by Peter Dalman, who began by declaring all positions vacant and calling for any last-minute nominations. None were forthcoming. He warmly acknowledged the work of the Committee over the past year, and in light of Bill Elder stepping down from the Committee due to health reasons, made special mention of, and thanks for, the wonderful contribution by Bill across numerous areas over a number of years.

**Election outcome** In the absence of any other nominations, Peter declared all of the nominees below duly elected to the Committee and wished them well for the coming year

**President:** Margaret Rich

**Vice President:** Vacant at present.

**Secretary:** Emily Noble

**Treasurer:** Kathryn Elder

**Newsletter Editor:** Valerie Hocking (Vireya Jacquard has kindly offered to back-up this role)

**Committee:** Graeme Lunt, Elva Bird, Sheree Cartledge, Andrew Arnold, John Petheram

**General Business:** Due to the Club's financially stable position, the Committee recommended that 2023-24 membership fees stay at 2022-23 levels. Given the rise in cost of postage stamps from \$1.10 to \$1.20, newsletter postage should increase accordingly. Club members in attendance agreed. Membership fees are set at: Ordinary Member (Adult) \$35.00 Family \$55.00 Distant Member \$20.00 Student Member \$15.00 Newsletter Postage \$13.20 Carried

Margaret Rich mysteriously announced that there were a few other items of Special Business that hadn't been included in the Agenda. They began with the presentation of a Club Medal, an Award of Merit presented to members who have significantly contributed to the Club's activities and to the wider furtherance of natural history or conservation or education in natural history. After noting that there had been 12 of these Awards issued since the Award's inauguration in 1993 and that it had been five years since the last one was awarded, Margaret read through the Eligibility Criteria and announced that Emily Noble was to receive the Club Medal.

Margaret proceeded to read through her award citation and presented Emily with the medal. John Gregurke then announced that John Petheram was also to be presented with a Club Medal and proceeded to read through his citation before presenting John with the medal. John gave a short thank-you speech. Peter Dalman followed with the announcement that a third Club Medal was to be presented, to the murmur of the crowd. The recipient was William (Bill) Elder. With the Zoom camera turned to Peter in the front row surrounded by attending members, Peter read the citation for Bill's award and held up the medal to show Bill who was attending virtually from Tasmania via Zoom. Peter and Claire noted that they would present the award to Bill personally when he arrived home the following week. Bill gave a short thank-you speech. All nominations were warmly applauded by Club members. • The March 2023 Club Meeting immediately followed the AGM

### **President's Report for 2023 AGM**

This was the year when we at last began to meet again face to face. Zoom helped us through the worst of the pandemic and we maintain it still as a useful tool for allowing hybrid meetings. It is also useful for Committee meetings, as the homes of members of the Committee are widely spaced. It will perhaps encourage members to join the Committee knowing that they can attend the meetings generally from home. Zoom also appeals as a means of having speakers from a greater distance without them needing to travel. To make use of this technology, as a Club, we are indebted to Graeme Lunt.

We could still meet for excursions being outdoors.

We delayed meeting face to face until November and celebrated seeing each other again at our 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Stella Bedgood Memorial Lecture, this year given by Honorary Fellow John Delpratt from the University of Melbourne. John spoke to us about Victorian Volcanic Plains grasslands restoration. He spoke of the

highly innovative restoration project that he has worked on with the Woorndoo-Chatsworth Landcare Group. He described the methods employed and the need for large quantities of good quality seed and the various methods used for seed production. In introducing John, Emily Noble spoke passionately about our former member, Stella Bedggood, and her achievements and the impact she had on the members of the Ballarat Field Nats.

Our field excursion to Neville Oddie's property at Chepstowe enabled us to have a direct experience of a conserved and restored grassy wildflower meadow. Neville told us of his methods and we could see the results as we walked over the land. From Chepstowe we went on to visit a very full Lake Goldsmith and later viewed one of Victoria's largest volcanic maars, Stockyard Hill.

While the year's program was not deliberately planned this way, we had a water theme in our talks and excursions over the year. Early in the year, Val Hocking organised a paddle-steamer trip on Lake Wendouree. It was a festive feeling as the boat paddled around the Lake and it gave us the opportunity to see the birds in among the reeds in the middle of the Lake. Also early in the year, Emily led two excursions to wetlands, the first to wetlands in Ballarat and in the following month to the wetlands at Haddon and Smythesdale searching for damselflies and dragonflies.

Dr Greg Kerr, Senior Ecologist with Nature Glenelg Trust, was our-speaker in April. His topic was titled, 'Establishing a Long Term Citizen Science Biodiversity Monitoring Program to inform Adaptive Management', the proposal being for a project in Glenelg Hopkins region. We all wished that funding could be found for such a project here.

Continuing the water theme in April, Andy Arnold led us on a fascinating journey exploring the creeks and wetlands west of Ballarat. Then in May we visited some of the nineteenth century water races in Creswick Regional Park led by John Petheram and myself. Later in the year, in September, we explored some of the many little creeks in southern Ballarat with Jeff Rootes of Bunanyung Landscape Alliance.

A totally different landscape was shown to us in May by Geraldine and Geoff Harris, of Castlemaine, in their illustrated talk on their nature travels in remote areas of western Queensland. The Harris' chose to extend their travels when covid regulations closed state



borders.

From outback Queensland to the beauty and mysteries of fungi, our member, Les Hanrahan, shared his knowledge and his amazing photographs of fungi in June, in a superbly illustrated talk followed later by a field trip. Due to some wild weather, the field trip to Korweinguboorra was delayed until June 17<sup>th</sup>. Les has recorded more observations of fungi on iNaturalist than any other contributor.

In July, Chris Timewell, BirdLife Australia's Acting Woodland Bird Program Leader gave us an insight into the many and varied projects of the Woodland Birds Team. We learnt that 1 in 4 birds in Australia's temperate woodland is threatened or declining given drastically diminished habitat. Chris told us of some approaches being taken to mitigate threats for particular species.

Emily again led the excursion in July. (Last year's program relied heavily on Emily's knowledge and experience!) For this excursion she led us to Mt Yirip State Forest, a red ironbark forest where we saw many wonderful mosses, lichens and plants. From Mt Yirip we travelled to Flagstaff Hill Reserve, a BEN-managed Reserve of Granitic Sands Grassy Woodland.

In August, we were treated to an amazing talk and excursion by Emily on the Orchids of Ballarat. Emily told us that 132 indigenous orchids have been recorded within 50km of Ballarat (30% of the total found in Victoria) and yet Ballarat's orchids don't appear on any maps. This is important as it means our region's significant flora is not being considered in land management decisions. Emily then proceeded through the calendar year describing and illustrating the species to be found throughout the year. Many of her superb photographs showed pollinators at work.

In September the Club took part in an Expo at the Earth Education Centre that was specifically aiming to interest young people. John Petheram coordinated the display and produced a leaflet describing the FNCB and its scope for younger members. Elspeth Swan designed a new Club banner for use at the Expo.

In October we heard a talk on *What Influences Carbon Sequestration in the Wombat State Forest*. It was presented by Ella Plumanns Pouton and Dr Nina Hinko-Najera of the School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences, University of Melbourne. The very detailed presentation was of research carried out in the Wombat State Forest

from 2013 to 2017. It looked at the carbon balance there, the influences at work and the consequences for the environment generally.

The excursion in October was to Clarkesdale Bird Sanctuary. It was led by Emily who sent out lists she had compiled of birds and plants that have been recorded at the Sanctuary.- 160 species of indigenous birds and 340 species of indigenous plants, including 50 orchids! In the morning we walked in the Bird Paddock and in the afternoon moved to another part of the Sanctuary, the Jubilee Block. It was a mass of flowering orchids and other plants. There was great delight as we rushed around calling out what we had found.

During the year, some members attended SEANA Camps. The Autumn Camp was held in Portland and the Spring Camp on the Mornington Peninsula. Enthusiastic reports came back from those who attended each of these.

Three of our evenings were for members' images – Lake Wendouree, Not-so-Creepy Crawlies and Family Album.

Our Christmas break-up was at the Trust for Nature property, Stringybark, the home of immediate Past-President Bill Elder and his wife, Treasurer, Kathy Elder. We wandered around the 20-acre property, enjoyed the fellowship and marvelled at how well Bill was looking and how the very heavy rains had changed things a bit at Stringybark.

We have an odd year for the program which includes February of the next year. Our speaker in February was Ian Ashton, a long-time member of Birdlife Ballarat. It was a lively and informative talk, invaluable for the coming excursion, led by John Gregurke, to the Western Treatment Plant, as Ian explained the features to look for on the birds in order to correctly identify them. We all remembered to look for the earphones on the White-winged Black Tern!

During the year, Bill found that due to his health he could no longer manage the Newsletter and Val Hocking stepped into the position of editor. There was a smooth transition and the high standard of articles and photos has continued.

Some other points that I should note in this report: Elspeth represented the Club at the Photo Shoot for the media release protesting Vic Forests salvage logging; many members took part in the Great Southern Blitz and Vireya wrote an excellent report of this for the February 2023 Newsletter; and, work continues on the revision of our booklet, 'Discovering Ballarat's Bushland' under the leadership of Carol Hall.

**The Medal of Merit of the Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat** is for a member who has significantly contributed to the Club's activities and to the wider furtherance of natural history, or conservation or education in natural history

**Emily Noble Awarded the FNCB Medal of Merit**

Emily joined FNCB in 2013 and offered to be Secretary the same year!

She has now served as Secretary for nine years.

Emily has been the speaker at Club meetings on many occasions, often on her favourite topic of orchids. Just this last year she presented a thoroughly researched and beautifully illustrated lecture on orchids in the Ballarat region. She has also led many excursions. She has been very active promoting natural history in the community in projects with Ballarat Environment Network (BEN) as well as at Clarkesdale Bird Sanctuary, creating extensive species lists, guiding visitors around and monitoring specific areas.

Emily assists with the Photo-monitoring Project in Woowookarung Regional Park providing help with plant identification.

Margaret Rich

**John Petheram: Awarded Club Medal 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**

John joined FNCB in 2011. Since then, he has been an active member of the Club and has served as a committee member for 5 years.

He participated in members' nights with pictures on a wide range of topics including some of the South African fauna. I remember his talk *Trials on the Grampians Peaks Trail* as guest speaker.

He has led many excursions to the Creswick area where we all learnt much about water race, mining dams, gardens and other remnants of the mining era.

He has worked tirelessly to promote natural history in the community. He led the work to replace signage on the La Gerche trail. He spent hours walking through Creswick Regional Park to protect the flora and fauna from potential damage being caused by Mountain Bike Trails construction. He has spent many hours on the Photo-monitoring Project in Woowookarung Regional Park supplying information to Parks Victoria about regeneration in the ex-plantation sites. He successfully applied for grant money to purchase equipment useful in environmental monitoring for the club. At present he is working with other historians to prepare a submission to Heritage Victoria to list Creswick Alluvial Goldfields as Cultural Heritage landscapes.

I have pleasure in presenting the Club Medal to John Petheram.

John Gregurke



### **William (Bill) Elder's Club Medal presentation**

I was pleased and honoured to present a club medal to Bill Elder as Bill approached 10 years of club membership, having joined the club in early 2014. We first remember meeting Bill at a Ballarat hosted SEANA camp at Pax Hill. He was directing parking which was indicative of how Bill pitched in straight away after he came to Ballarat from Melbourne. Bill has taken on numerous leadership and contributory roles in not only our club but the local area generally, demonstrating his strong interest in and commitment to the environment. On the committee for three years and as president for two years in 2020 and 2021, he led the club during the trying years of COVID. During his five years as newsletter editor from 2018, as well as the usual content, there was often additional information, articles and pictures, ensuring it was looked forward to each month and this has continued even as his health was compromised.

Bill looked to the future with his work with juniors including his own grandchildren, establishing a junior group, the Rat Nats, and Facebook page, passing on his knowledge and experience. He also willingly shared his knowledge, leading excursions and making presentations with his special interest of insects featuring. He has been instrumental in getting our citizen science and record-keeping projects in iNaturalist going.

During many visits to Stringybark, Bill and Kathy's bush property and home, Bill shared his environmental commitment, explaining

his philosophy of self-sustainability with his fire-ready, off-grid home, vegetable garden and wood from the property for heating. As a group we always felt welcome at Stringybark, with December Christmas gatherings on their verandah being special.

Bill's community engagement link extended to the Haddon community where he was a teacher, guide and mentor to the wider local community. Bill's active role at Haddon meant we were able to use the facility during COVID when our normal venue was closed. His wider community commitment was also shown in his work to influence the Hepburn Shire with their bike trail plans, helping with submissions and presenting the club perspective to a council meeting, thus influencing the protection of the flora and fauna of the Creswick area.

Bill's friendly and engaging nature has helped ensure an enjoyable club. I remember that at the Coleraine camp he played his ukulele giving us songs from the era of our younger years. Bill has definitely earned and deserves the awarding of a club medal and it gave me great pleasure being the person to pass it on to him.

Peter Dalman



Peter presented Bill with his Medal on 10th March at their home



## **Club Medal Resume: Emily Noble, John Petheram and Bill Elder, January 2023**

### **Emily Noble Club Medal Nomination**

1. Joined Club in 2013.
2. 9 years as Secretary (and has said she will nominate to continue for a tenth year).
3. Work done within the club: Guest Speaker on many occasions, often about her favourite topic of Orchids. Presented opening night talk at the SEANA Autumn Camp in 2005, led excursions for same and assisted in camp organisation. Presented Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture in 2021. Leader of many excursions. Regular participant in Members' Images nights and contributor to the FNCR's iNaturalist projects. Regularly writes up guest speaker presentations for club newsletter and shares field reports. Circulates a wide range of natural history-related documents and event information to members.
4. Work done to promote natural history in the community: Emily has been involved in natural history work and monitoring with Ballarat Environment Network and Clarksdale Bird Sanctuary and has presented numerous talks on various aspects of natural history to other field naturalists' clubs, Nature Stewards, BirdLife Ballarat, local university and TAFE students and groups like U3A, Landcare, Probus, orchid societies and Bushwalking clubs.
5. Initiation, organisation or participation in projects: Assisted with Photo-monitoring Project in Woowookarung Regional Park providing help with plant identification; participated in the La Gerche Trail project; collated Club records of orchids in the district; takes a lead role in organising the club's Calendar of Activities; participation in the Great Southern BioBlitz. Points for initiation, organisation or participation in projects.

John Gregurke, January 2023

### **Bill Elder Club Medal Nomination**

1. Joined Club in 2014.
2. Two years as President. Five years as Newsletter Editor. Three years on Committee.
3. Work done within the club: Guest Speaker on many occasions, insects being one of Bill's interests. Regular contributor to members' nights. Leader of many excursions, in particular to the Elder's property at Smythesdale.
4. Work done to promote natural history in the community: Bill worked on submissions to the Creswick Trails Project to ensure that

the flora and fauna of Creswick Regional Park is protected. He presented the FNCBs concerns to a Special Hepburn Shire Council meeting. Bill has compiled numerous submissions to government on a variety of draft environment-related documents in recent years, including the *VEAC Central West Forests Investigation*, the *Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria*, *Review of The Wildlife Act* and the proposed *Lake Wendouree Trail Lighting Project*.

5. Initiation, organisation or participation in projects: Bill has been the instigator in setting up and leading the Junior Field Nats group “The Rat Nats”, the club’s Facebook page and club projects in iNaturalist. He also participated in the La Gerche Trail project.

John Gregurke, January 2023

### **John Petheram Club Medal Nomination**

1..Joined Club in 2011.

2. 5 years as Committee member.

3. Work done within the club: Guest Speaker at Club meetings; participation in members’ nights with pictures on a wide range of topics. Leader of many excursions particularly to historical sites in Creswick Regional Park. Involvement in Calendar of Activities organisation. Regular write-ups of guest speaker presentations for the newsletter.

4. Work done to promote natural history in the community. Undertook extensive research on content for the update of interpretive signage on the La Gerche Trail. Worked tirelessly to protect the flora and fauna and historic values in Creswick Regional Park from damage caused by Mountain Bike Trails. John has contributed to numerous submissions to government on a variety of draft environment-related documents in recent years, including the *VEAC Central West Forests Investigation*.

5. Initiation, organisation or participation in projects. Leader of Photo-monitoring Project in Woowookarung Regional Park, supplying information to Parks Victoria about regeneration in the ex-plantation sites. Involvement in seed collection and propagation of those seeds for revegetation projects at Woowookarung Regional Park; involvement in trail rationalisation/ alignment meetings at Woowookarung as a FNCB representative. Led the work to replace signage on the La Gerche Trail.

John Gregurke, January 2023

## **Excerpts from the FNCB General Meeting March 3rd**

**Attendance:** FNCB President Margaret Rich warmly welcomed 28 members (including five via Zoom) & two visitors.

### **Syllabus Item: “Members’ Images: Natural Engineering”.**

Seven members (Sheree, Val, Carol, Claire, Emily, Neville and Andy) presented images and corresponding information on various aspect of “natural engineering”, including spider webs, orchid flowers, birds’ nests, termite nests, insect nests, pitcher plant flowers, stinkhorns, Thorny Devils, water and wind sculpting and Grass-trees. Presenting members will write-up their short presentations for the newsletter

### **Correspondence Report accepted**

#### **. Business Arising from Correspondence:**

- Sharon Lorimer’s application for membership of the FNCB was accepted at the February Committee Meeting. Please introduce yourself when you get a chance.
- The Field Naturalists’ Club of Victoria is inviting a representative from each field naturalist club to join the General Committee for the Australian Natural History Medallion. The General Committee is tasked with administering the ANHM largely via email, with just one Zoom meeting commitment expected for the year. In the absence of another volunteer, Emily offered to represent the FNCB on the General Committee of the ANHM.

### **Reports:**

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Opening bal. (as at Feb. 3):	\$8,701.28
Income	\$65.00
Expenses:	\$222.75
Closing bal.	: <u>\$8,543.53</u>

Kathy’s Report was approved

Kathy also noted that following the ratification of fee amounts for 2023-24 membership at the AGM, Club Membership Fees are now due, with payment via EFT preferred, - see Page 23

Life Members (Genny Binns, Janet Dale, Ken Hammond, Margaret Rotheram and Roger Thomas), are exempt from paying fees although a contribution of \$13.20 to cover postage costs is still payable for those who have requested a hard copy of each newsletter in the mail.

Membership Rates are set at: \$15 student \$35 individual \$55 family \$20 distant member. \$13.20 to cover postage for those who wish to receive a hard copy of the newsletter in the mail.

**Discovering Ballarat's Bushland revision-** Carol Hall provided a comprehensive update. It included the following: -a number of site revisions are now complete, and many others allocated to members for completion are in progress. Sites for which no-one is allocated will hopefully be the subject of Club field trips over the coming months.

**. General Business**

**March field trip,** Sunday 5th March “Melton Botanic Gardens” 40 Lakewood Blvd, Melton from 10.30am at the Gardens to 4pm back in Ballarat: to be led by Elspeth Swan.

The travel distance is approximately 80km. Reminder– if car-pooling with another member, please make a fair contribution to their fuel costs.

**Other general business:** Shirley brought along a box of nature/environment themed books and invited members to take home any they would read.

**Show & Tell/ Field Reports:** absorbed into “Member’s Images”

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**Next Meeting: “Hidden Treasures- Moths of Victoria” to be presented by Marilyn Hewish.**

**When? Friday 14th April, 2023** (a week later than usual to avoid Good Friday), 7.30pm in person at the Federation University building at the corner of Gillies St & Gregory St, Wendouree  
Or via Zoom if you prefer.

N.B. We will be in a different room to our normal room As this room comfortably seats about 20 people, Emily will ask for attendees names up front to ensure we have a good audience size for our guest speaker, but also the Zoom alternative.

Emperor Gum Moth



**Note from the Treasurer- FNCB Annual Membership**

**Reminder to all members that we now invite you to renew your membership of our Club for 2023/24**

The preferred method for you to pay is via direct deposit into the FNCB bank account.

**Rates are again set at: \$15 student      \$35 individual  
   \$55 family      \$20 distant member.**

**\$13.20 to cover postage for those who wish to receive a hard copy of the newsletter in the mail.**

**Account Name: Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat Inc.**

**BSB: 633 000 Account Number: 119112290.**

**Please quote your name as the reference.**

Note - new members who have just joined and paid in full in January or February, 2023 do not need to pay again until the AGM in 2024. Life Members do not have to pay these annual fees

Kathy Elder Treasurer

Taking the place of our April monthly excursion, you are invited to attend **The inaugural Moorabool Mushroom Festival, - a big event to be held in Ballan on April 15-16th**

To see more details about the event and register head to <https://myco.org.au/fungi-festival/>

We're pleased to let you know that the Event Coordinator for the festival, Ema Corro, will be the guest speaker at our Club Meeting on Friday 2nd June, the perfect lead-up to our Fungi field trip on Sunday 4th June

**Early Notice—South East Australian Naturalists Association (SEANA) Camp in Spring (October 20-23). This year, it will be based in Yarram and hosted jointly by the Latrobe Valley FNC and Sale & District FNC.**

Our Club is a member of SEANA so all of our members are entitled to attend SEANA Camps. . Their program of events to choose from includes a whale cruise and maritime museum visit, birding, botanising, learning about seagrasses restoration, mangroves, coastal vegetation.



## **Excursions and Meetings coming up**

**Fri April 14th** speaker Marilyn Hewish Hidden Treasures – Moths of Victoria

**Sat or Sunday April 15/16th** Moorabool Mushroom Festival-at Ballan: Members to make their own arrangements

### ***Future events***

**Fri May 5th** speaker Leon Bren Lake Corangamite: Victoria's largest & most unloved lake

**Sat May 6th** Stockyard Hill Lake Goldsmith

**Autumn SEANA Camp April 28th—30th Port Campbell**  
**hosted by Timboon FNC**

**Next Committee meeting Tuesday 25th April 7.30 pm by Zoom**

### **Committee**

President	Margaret Rich
Secretary	Emily Noble
Treasurer	Kathy Elder
Committee	Andy Arnold
	Val Hocking
	Graeme Lunt
	John Petheram
	Elva Bird
	Sheree Cartledge

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Treasurer Kathy Elder

**Website:** <http://fieldnatballarat.wordpress.com>

**Club email:** [ballaratfnc@gmail.com](mailto:ballaratfnc@gmail.com)

**Meetings** - in person and may continue to be held via Zoom.

Members will be kept informed of arrangements each month.

A monthly publication of the Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat Inc.  
Incorporation # A0014919P ..... ABN 13 150 403 135